1: Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SO8 Timbira SO8

ments of the Krîkatí and Pụkóbye were of the same order; of these, Canto da Aldea had eight huts, São Felix thirteen, and Recurso eleven. These dwellings were either quite open or had a single wall in the rear, whose palm leaves were attached in vertical position, with the points downward. This mode of attachment is characteristic of the aboriginal Eastern Timbira, the method now customary among the Rąmkô'kamekra (p. 40), having been adopted from the Neobrazilians according to the Indians' own statements. The smallest and poorest huts I have seen are those in Recurso.

The Kre'pụ'mkateye settlement of Gamelleira do Rumo is situated in the woods, on the steep left bank, 50 m. in height, of the Rio Grajahú. It comprises eight rather small huts, most of them having walls of clay-daubed latticework; they surround an approximately round plaza of barely 50 m. in diameter.

Sleeping and sitting accommodations.—The principal article of furniture is the platform bed (pę'ra), a grid of closely laid burity leaf stalks resting on four forked posts with two crossbeams. Its ordinary elevation above the floor is about 50 cm., the length from 170 to 200 cm., and the width varies according to the number of occupants—from half a meter for a single person to 3 m. for a sizable family. If the house has a closed space, the beds—one for each individual family—are always indoors. A young girl generally constructs her platform bed below the roof at a height of 2 m., and surrounds it with a partition of mats; for a ladder she uses a notched log or simply a pole tied in slanting position. The boys and young men as a rule sleep in the plaza outdoors, but several of them may sleep on a platform bed indoors. This is, however, merely a makeshift in case of rain.

A larger or smaller number of mats lie on the bed, which when properly made has a bottom layer of one or two mats of babassu or anajá grass (kupíp) to level the unevenness of the surface, with mats of burity bast (ka'tụ') above. The former are long, but relatively narrow and always in a two-step twilling technique; the latter of any desired width (up to 120 cm.), but at most 1 m. in length, to which must be added a 30 to 40 cm. fringe. Some of the Indians make burity mats de luxe by plaiting into the fabric ornamental horizontal or vertical stripes or squares and painting them with yellow dots, strokes, and zigzags, the pigment being derived from the root of the urucú shrub. The burity mats do service as a covering, but the feet remain bare, being always kept warm at night by a fire maintained at the foot of the bed.

However, the mat-covered platform beds also serve as benches and tables; indeed, a large part of domestic life is spent on them. Many take their meals there, some permit pet dogs to find a resting place on the bed. In consequence the mats are usually greasy and brownish-red from urucú and dirt. When they have turned filthy, they are washed in a stream with the leaves of a shrub that yield a soaplike lather. On the other hand, the anajá and babassu grass mats, which can be quickly manufactured, are never washed, but simply superseded by new ones.

On fine nights many families are accustomed to sleep for several hours on mats on the ground directly in front of their houses. After sunset the people like to sit on mats outdoors and thus simply remain lying there, falling asleep, even without a fire, until the chill of the morning drives them inside.

Indoors the Canella mostly seat themselves on the bed or, if it should be present, on a hammock. However, there are also, though rather rarely, curved little stools (mekričą) from the spathe of the anajá (avarprēp), especially among the Krîkatí and Pụkópye. Outdoors one likes to seat oneself on mats, women also using for this purpose fire fans (pl. 12, *a*); and in the woods a bunch of leaves is torn off and

Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1936) 1946 SCS Timbira SCS

Hygiene

515 Unless subject to taboos, both sexes bathe at least once a day, the younger people twice or three times. If all the residents are assembled during the vų'tę' period, the younger generation take their first bath jointly before sunrise as soon as the youths' and maidens' dance in the plaza abruptly comes to a stop. At that moment all dash toward the brook, including the girls, who have quickly fetched their gourd bottles. Men and women of mature age are also in the habit of joining, but those really old rarely come, if at all. The girls go directly upstream, take up a position counter to the current, and fill their vessels, everyone laughing and splashing about. At this early hour the air is piercing cold on the steppe, and precisely before sunrise a gust of wind is likely to make the bathers shiver as they get out of their bath. In order to get warm everybody rushes up the slope toward the village. But the members of whatever festive organizations happen to be functioning assemble halfway to the settlement around fires, for which they have already brought along dry palm grass. Only after having warmed themselves they run shouting, each society separately, into the village, where each occupies its appropriate site in the plaza.

During the day they generally bathe again, performing their ablutions by rubbing themselves with their hands or with leaves. After nightfall they avoid entering the water. The hair, as noted, is washed by rubbing it between the palms. Notwithstanding their efforts the skin rarely appears wholly clean, for it usually retains remnants of old body paint, feathers glued on, and the like—the sort of [854] things regarded as dirt by civilized people. Babies at the breast are the cleanest part of the population, for they are washed without delay as soon as they are dirty.

The oral cavity is cleansed with the index and middle fingers and rinsed with sand. They never clean their fingernails.

[857] When at most three years old the Rąmkõ'kamekra boys and girls know how to swim and dive. I observed that the Krahõ', Kre'pų'mkateye, and the Timbira of 481 Araparytína were all good swimmers, and the same has been reported of the Põrekamekra.[359] On the other hand, I had a different impression of the Krĩkati, 171 who do not live along running watercourses and of whom I suspect at least some are unable to swim. At all events they manifested a striking repugnance to deep water, as I noted repeatedly when they accompanied me from their village to Porto Franco on the Tocantins. At the Ribeirão da Aldea, whose wooded bank was somewhat more than knee-deep under water, while in midstream the water of the brook did not extend beyond my saddle, these Indians cut off sticks to take soundings ahead of them, and I had long reached the opposite bank when I still heard them splashing behind me and excitedly shouting at one another. They talked of the Ribeirão dos Arraias, which is 20 m. wide and 1½ deep, as though it were an insurmountable obstacle; and the successful crossing took an eternity, for each of the women had to be led across by two men. Still more amusing was the passage of the shallow, but swift streamlet known as Lageado in a canoe belonging to a Neobrazilian. At first no one ventured to step into it, and when the first hero hesitantly and diffidently succumbed to my mockery, his wife kept singing in a booming voice on the bank till she saw him safely on land.

356 The dwellings are in general tolerably cleanly. Every self-respecting woman will 412 sweep her house and the space before it at least once a day—even several times if [137] the offals after a meal require it. The brooms are made of the inflorescence of the assahy (*Euterpe* sp.) or the bacaba palm (*Oenocarpus* sp.), or a bundle of mallow

[359] Pohl, Reise, 2:200 f.

1: Nimuendajú E-5 (1929-1938) 1946 SOS Timbira SOS
6e. 515

twigs tied together. Garbage is accumulated on the firefan or an old mat and carried to the border of the steppe, to the rear of the house. However, there are women who are not particular about a little dirt more or less, and who will leave the rinds of fruits and gnawed bones lying about all day long.

The domestic vermin include crickets, cockroaches, small ants, and jiggers. The first two are simply put up with. As for ant nests, the Indians try to destroy them with hot water; and as soon as they become aware of jiggers, they periodically pour water on the floor, which they stamp on till it grows firm. Those which have penetrated the skin are removed with a bone needle—for which at present an iron one may be substituted.

All utensils are rather dirty, for it never occurs to them to clean objects before storage. The clothing that is obligatory on visits to Barra do Corda is subsequently stowed away for one's own or another's future use without attention to the accumulated dirt and perspiration. Dishes are never washed after use, though this is done before again using them. Storage bags and sleeping mats are often filthy, though the latter are washed when the dirt grows too offensive.

The Indians go to stool in the steppe or in the mallow bushes to the rear of their houses, at an adequate distance. They clean themselves with kerneled maize cobs or with two little sticks broken off on the way. The feces of infants in the house or on the space before it are at once strewn with sand and removed.

The Canella are very sensitive as to evil smells, though they do not always perceive the same things as stench as civilized people. As noted, they regard as pleasant the odor of urucú, from which Neobrazilians recoil, and they are strangely indifferent to the odor of the skunk (*Mephitis suffocans*), which to my nostrils is the most horrible to be found in the Timbira country. However, excrements and putrefying matter are intolerable to them and are removed posthaste.

Breaking wind is considered indecorous indoors, but rather a pleasure on the steppe or in the plaza among the younger generation. Indeed, young girls sometimes vie with one another in this respect and try to enhance the effect by hitting their own buttocks with their clenched fists. However, this happens only among themselves, never in the presence of older people.

Farming

It is erroneous to picture the Gê generically as hunters and gatherers, with at best an occasional group adopting a little cultivation under Tupí influence.[128] Actually, not a single Akwẽ or Timbira-Kayapó tribe failed to farm; and as to the latter, at least, I am convinced that they learnt nothing from the Tupí about agriculture. Old travelers sometimes decree that such and such a tribe lived "only by hunting" or even "by robbery only." Thus, Saint-Adolphe alleges that the Apinayé had grown accustomed to a vegetable diet only through the plantations made by the military colony of São João de Araguaya (founded in 1797). He overlooked the passage in which Villa Real—four years prior to the establishment of that colony—urged a treaty of peace with the Apinayé on the ground of their cultivating manioc on a large scale.[129]

Following Ribeiro and Pohl, Snethlage states that the Timbira when first in contact with civilization already practiced a well-defined system of tillage and rightly surmises that the four species listed by Ribeiro do not exhaust the number of their crops. At present the Rąmkõ'kamekra plant the following species, which shall be

[128] For a typical expression of this view see Schmidt, Kulturkreise und Kulturschichten in Südamerika, 1023.

[129] Viagem, 409.

/48 cont./

123 622 574 352 285 upon him by the governor as a badge of his rank -- Surrounded by many curious members of his tribe, he welcomed me with dignified gravity, bade me enter, and ushered me and my servant to the place of honor on his bed, a wooden platform covered with

142 291 301 302 516

The Canella Indian Luiz and his wife Donna.

123 622 574 352 285 buriti-fiber mats (Port. girao) (2), which stood apart to the right

2. Pronounce the "g" in "girao" like the French "j."

of the entrance.

342 Some minutes were needed to become accustomed to the twilight in the room, which received daylight only through the door and a few gaps in the palm-straw walls.

356 The relatively great cleanliness which prevailed in the hut made a pleasant impression.